



CA Dept. of Food and Agriculture Farm Bill 2007 Listening Session Sacramento State Capitol

August 1, 2006

1. Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP)

The Federal Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) is a key food assistance program, especially as corporate food donations have continued to decrease over the last several years. About 50 California food banks participate in EFAP. For some smaller, rural food banks, EFAP food may be the only source of emergency food for their community.

For FFY 2005, the California Department of Social Services received \$15.8 million for food purchase and \$7.3 million for storage and distribution of commodities. California food banks distributed a total of 77 million pounds of EFAP commodities, including 39 million (over 50%) in USDA "bonus" commodities. An additional 10.8 million pounds of produce and other donated food was provided through California's Donate Don't Dump program, supported through EFAP funds.

California EFAP Needs:

1. Increased Funding for Storage and Distribution: Over the last several years, storage and distribution costs for food banks have skyrocketed. However, most food banks are reimbursed less than half their EFAP costs. This causes other food bank services and programs to suffer.
2. Increased Bonus Commodities: Over 50% of the USDA commodities distributed in California in 2005 were "bonus" commodities purchased with Federal Section 32 funds. This source of food is critical to meeting the needs of hungry Californians. Again, additional funds are needed to provide these shelf-stable, nutritious foods to low-income families throughout California.

2. Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

CSFP provides USDA commodities and funds to food banks and other agencies to provide monthly nutritious food packages low-income mothers, young children, and the elderly. Each month, recipients receive a package valued at almost \$50. Approximately 80% of the caseload in California are seniors.

The California Department of Education contacts with 5 providers to serve 57,000 people each month in 11 counties, including: Orange, San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Stanislaus, Merced, Sonoma, Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt and Del Norte.

CSFP brings in over 20 million pounds of highly nutritious food into California each year. CSFP supports California agriculture. Much of the food purchased for CSFP are California products, such as fruits and grains purchased from California vendors such as Del Monte, Argo, Paradiso and Taste O the West.

California CSFP Needs:

Funding to Allow for Expansion of CSFP in California: CAFB supports increased funding to allow for CSFP program expansion throughout California and throughout the country so that low-income mothers and children not served by WIC and low-income seniors have access to the nutritious food they need.

In recent years, insufficient federal appropriations have resulted in caseload cuts in California and throughout the nation. These cuts disproportionately impact seniors since by law seniors must be eliminated first. California providers have already reduced their caseload by 3,600. At the Senate proposed level of \$108 million, this cut would grow to over 6,000 in 2007.

Over 400,000 low-income seniors are currently eligible for CSFP in California. As our aging population continues to grow, this number will also grow.

3. Increased Support for Acquiring and Distribution Produce through California's Food Bank Network

California food banks are dramatically increasing their distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables through local donations and through such programs as California Emergency Foodlink's *Donate Don't Dump* and the California Association of Food Bank's (CAFB) *Farm to Family* programs. Distribution of produce has grown from approximately 25 million pounds of produce just 3 years ago to an estimate of over 45 million in 2006.

California Produce Needs:

Additional funding resources are needed to support this continued growth. We need funding to support:

- Acquiring produce at the state, regional, and local level
- Storage and distribution of produce statewide
- Equipment (refrigeration, refrigerated trucks, forklift, etc) to expand food bank capacity to distribute produce
- Development of programs and distribution networks at the local level to allow for increased distribution of produce throughout the community

CAFB recommends creating a new initiative, similar to Farm to School, to provide fruits and vegetables to food banks and our clients and also benefit "specialty crop" farmers. CAFB also recommends providing additional resources to EFAP to support expanding distribution of produce through the EFAP program.

About the California Association of Food Banks: The California Association of Food Banks (CAFB) was founded in 1995 to promote collaboration in response to emerging social, economic and legislative challenges impacting hungry people throughout California. Our food bank network distributes over 200 million pounds of food to 5,000 community-based agencies each year. These agencies distribute food to over 2 million hungry individuals each month. As effective as this network is, it cannot come close to meeting the need. To accomplish our mission, our membership of 40 food banks and advocacy organizations focuses on supporting food banks, increasing the visibility of food banking, sharing food resources, coordinating statewide outreach programs for the Summer Lunch and Food Stamp Programs and influencing public policy.

Farm Bill Nutrition Forum
Oakland, CA
10/06/05

The California Association of Food Banks has four nutrition priorities for the 2007 reauthorization of the Farm Bill.

1. Food Stamps

Access:

- Invest in technology that increases participation, building on the successful EBT transition.
- Reduce complexity in the application process (for example, with more Combined Application Projects).
- Promote outreach efforts at the national, state and local level.

Eligibility:

- Allow families to participate without forfeiting the opportunity to save.
- Extend eligibility to all who need food, including single adults, documented immigrants, and people with prior convictions.

Adequacy:

- Base monthly benefits on an updated measure of what families need to buy healthy food all month long.
- Increase minimum benefits from \$10 a month.

2. Emergency Food Assistance Program

- Increase funding for the storage and transportation of commodities to allow food banks to expand EFAP service.
- Expand the availability of bonus commodities to ensure a more nutritious and balanced package for recipients.
- Review and, if needed, improve nutritional value of processed and packaged commodities.

3. Farm to Food Bank

- Create a new initiative, similar to Farm to School, to provide fruits and vegetables to food banks and our clients and also benefit "specialty crop" farmers.

4. Food Stamp Nutrition Education

- Continue to support effective nutrition initiatives targeted at low-income consumers.

Kim McCoy Wade
California Association of Food Banks
kim@cafoodbanks.org 916-321-4435

CAFB is a membership association of 40 food banks serving 5000 charities and 2 million Californians each month.
Our mission is to build a well-nourished California.
www.cafoodbanks.org